

E 198

.B16

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

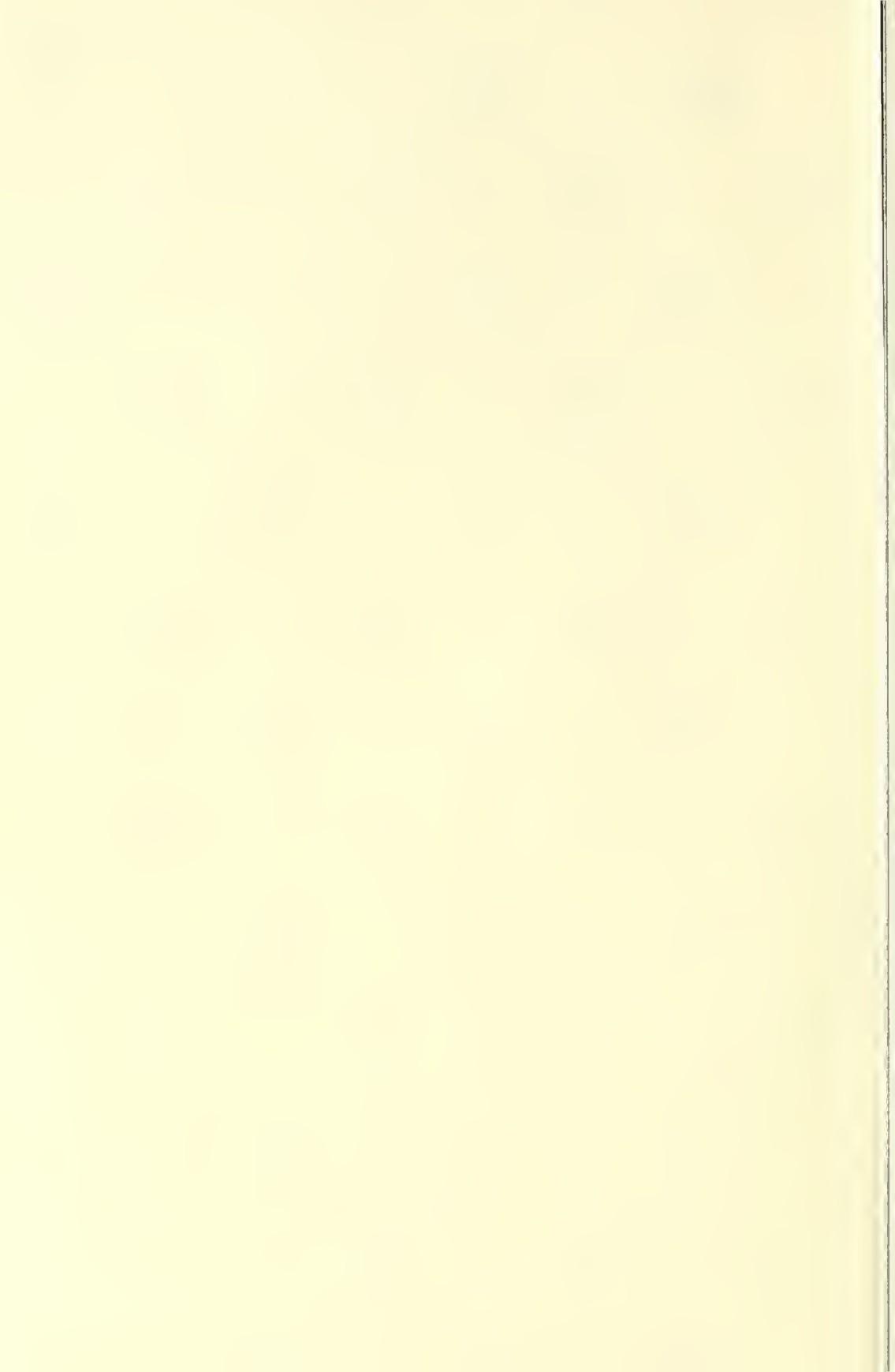


00003258014









✓

THE FIRST SIEGE OF
LOUISBURG 1745



THE FIRST SIEGE OF LOUISBURG

1745

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS

SEPTEMBER 2, 1909

BY

HENRY M. BAKER
GOVERNOR OF THE SOCIETY

v

CONCORD, N. H.
THE RUMFORD PRESS
1909

190
191

b)

33

The First Siege of Louisburg

1745

*An Address Delivered Before the New Hampshire Society
of Colonial Wars, September 2, 1909*

By Henry M. Baker, Governor of the Society.

Gentlemen of the Society, Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the beginning of the 18th century England, France and Spain were contending for the possession of the New World. The colonies of Spain were generally in the south and had no essential influence in determining the control of New England or Canada. France had possession of Canada and the territory along the ocean east of the Kennebec, and that fronting on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In addition to Canada, these possessions were known by the French as Acadia, Isle St. Jean, St. Christopher and Isle Royale or Cape Breton.

The English colonies extended from the Kennebec in Maine to the southern limit of Georgia. Theoretically they extended toward the west indefinitely.

The French early in the century planned to extend their settlements in Canada along the river St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes and thence down the Ohio and the Mississippi to Louisiana, encircling by their stations and forts the colonies of England with the intention of preventing their growth westward. This plan was larger and wiser than they had the capacity to execute. The French were generally Romanists and the English Protestants—many of them Puritans. Each in time of war with the other sought the coöperation of the Indians. The French, by their courtesy and fellowship, even comradeship with them, were uniformly more successful in such alliances than the English. Besides this, the Indi-

ans were more attracted by the ornate rituals of the Catholic service and mass than by the cold rigidity of the Puritan or other forms of Protestant worship. The French usually had the friendship of the Indians near whom they resided, while the English and the Indians were generally distrustful of each other and frequently at war. But the English are better colonists than the French, and from the beginning their settlements were the more prosperous and populous. They continued to increase more rapidly in wealth and population, so that at the time of Queen Anne's War and King George's War the English residents in North America were more than double those of the French, and during the so-called French and English wars were at least ten times more numerous.

Whenever France and England were at war their respective colonies were involved, so that for the twenty years preceding the Treaty of Paris in 1763 the Canadian and New England colonies were frequently under arms. Though each nation helped its colonies by powerful armaments, these wars were very exhausting to the colonies, both in men and money, and delayed their growth and prosperity.

Today we are to consider one campaign of that almost continuous warfare—a campaign not lacking in picturesque incidents, brilliant exploits and practical results.

Prior to the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) England and France held in North America the territory each had colonized. As already stated, the

French possessions included Acadia and St. Christopher. By that treaty Acadia, now known as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and St. Christopher, subsequently known as Newfoundland, were ceded to England. The French retained certain fishery rights in Newfoundland, which have occasioned numberless disputes, some of which are not yet harmoniously settled. Port Royal, which the French had fortified, was the only stronghold acquired under the treaty. The English re-named it Annapolis, in honor of their queen.

The French, having been compelled to surrender so much of their territory and valuable fishery rights, became apprehensive of the future. They saw the New England colonies rapidly increasing in population and wealth and knew that they were even more hostile to them than England herself. France had parted with an immense domain, yet the hearts of its inhabitants were still French and yearned for the time when the hated English rule should end. Though the last war had been disastrous to them they were not without hope. They began to prepare for the conflict which both nations knew was inevitable. England endeavored to secure the personal allegiance of the inhabitants of her newly acquired possessions and met with very indifferent success. They were generally willing to swear allegiance to England if their oaths could contain a stipulation that they should not be required to take up arms against their kinsmen, the French, but not otherwise. England would not grant this limitation, and hence its authority was exercised over unwilling subjects, who were a hindrance rather than an aid to the ruling power. Neither England nor the New England colonies erected any new fortifications of importance. They strengthened the defenses built by the French at Annapolis and secured them by a small garrison. They seemed to rely upon their increasing

numbers and wealth rather than in special military equipment. The colonial militia, however, was well organized, equipped and disciplined.

The French were not so confident of the increasing strength of their American colonial possessions. They had lost their only stronghold east and south of Quebec.

Among the demands made by England upon France as a condition of peace prior to the Treaty of Utrecht was a stipulation that France would not fortify Cape Breton. This France positively refused to grant, and the treaty contained no restriction on that point. When France had recovered from the war sufficiently to make a careful and accurate survey of her losses in America and to consider plans by which she might redeem them and regain her prestige upon land and sea, she could not forget that she had parted with much of her most available territory and the key to the control of the cod fishery, which was becoming more valuable each year. She had come to that period in her new world colonial experience when energetic measures, based upon wise plans, must be adopted and enforced. Nothing seemed more wise and beneficial than the erection upon Cape Breton of a fortress so strong that it could withstand the combined army and navy of England until reinforcements could raise the siege. The harbor of Louisburg was selected as the place best adapted to this purpose. Elaborate plans were made by Vanban and other eminent French military engineers, and the fortifications were begun in 1720, only seven years after peace had been declared. They were not completed until more than twenty years later, and it is stated that thirty millions of livres, or six million dollars, were expended in their construction. This amount, allowing for the greater purchasing value of money then, would be equivalent to at least ten million dollars now.

The harbor is in the southeast of the island and opens from the ocean through a main channel, easy of access and safe, though only about 500 feet wide. To the left of the channel there is a considerable expanse of shallow water, interspersed with rocky islands. Upon one of these, close to the channel, a formidable battery was erected as part of the fortifications, and was known as the island battery.

As the channel passed this island it expanded to the east and west, so that the harbor proper was more than two miles long. Between the west arm and the ocean a cape or headland extended eastward for a considerable distance, so that its extreme point was less than half a mile from the island battery. The town of Louisburg was built upon a segment of this headland and covered more than one hundred acres. It had six streets running east and west and seven north and south, crossing each other at right angles, thus subdividing it into regular squares.

Along the west or landward side of the town site the strongest fortifications were erected. They extended from the southwest shore of the harbor in a southeasterly direction, about 4,000 feet to the ocean, then eastward along the ocean more than a thousand feet, thence northerly to the harbor line and along the south shore of the harbor to an intersection with the principal line of defense—a total distance of about two and one half miles. These defenses included six bastions and three special batteries. The bastions were so constructed as to command every part of the adjacent wall. The king's bastion, or the citadel, contained apartments for the governor, a parade ground, a magazine, the barracks and a chapel. It was a fortress in itself and was constructed to sustain a siege after the other fortifications had been captured or abandoned.

The fortifications were about 225 feet in thickness and consisted of the

slope of the glacis, the banquette, the covert way, the ditch, the parapet, the banquette, the rampart and the slope of the talus. The ditch itself was 80 feet wide. The top of the parapet was from 30 to 36 feet above the bottom of the ditch and 26 feet above the town streets. The cannon were mounted upon the interior ramparts and were discharged through embrasures in the parapet. There were 148 of these embrasures, but the number of guns actually in position behind them is not definitely known, though some authorities give them as sixty-five cannons and sixteen mortars. In addition to the cannon thus mounted the several batteries had ninety-five guns. There were no guns mounted *en barbette*. Upon either banquette musketeers could be stationed and could defend the glacis or, shooting across the ditch, could fire upon the enemy if he had succeeded in gaining an entrance upon the covered way. The covered way was a shelter for soldiers or others and served also as a rendezvous for soldiers preparing for a sortie. Outside the landward wall were deep morasses extending to the foot of the glacis. They were impassable in many places and constituted in themselves a substantial defense. The walls enclosing the town were protected upon the harbor side by the Maurepas Bastion, the Battery la Gréve, the island battery of thirty-two forty-two pounders and the grand or royal battery north of the harbor, and just opposite its entrance with twenty-eight forty-two pounders and two eighteen pounders.

The walls were built principally of a porphyritic trap, a rock of good quality abundant in the neighborhood. The other materials were shipped from France or bought in the West Indies or in New England. It has been asserted, and probably with much truth, that the French officers in charge of the erection of the fortifications were more thoughtful of

their individual prosperity than careful of the integrity of their work. It is said that the stone used was not properly dressed or firmly laid, that the mortar was made with unsuitable sea sand and, in general, that negligence and corruption were not strangers in the camp. However that may be, it is evident that the fortifications crumbled more easily than friends or foes expected.

Yet in design these fortifications were as nearly perfect as their location would permit. The site of Louisburg was not commanding—it was practically at the sea level. Black Rock on the south, the Green Hills on the north and the hills on the east above the lighthouse, were each of greater elevation and should have been secured by auxiliary batteries. As they were undefended they served in both sieges as locations for the batteries which beat down the defenses of the town.

Including the garrison Louisburg usually sheltered about 4,000 inhabitants. At times this number was increased by the militia from the surrounding country. The garrison proper seldom exceeded 2,000 officers and men. It was by far too small to effectively man such extensive fortifications. Evidently the French could not, with such a force, maintain the outside defenses, so essential to the safety of the town.

The fortifications were scarcely completed when France, long smarting from her losses under the treaty of 1713, and claiming new grievances, declared war against England on the 15th of March, 1744.

Information of the impending war reached Louisburg several weeks before it became known in Boston, and the French, rejoicing in the security of their new fortress, soon began hostilities by an attack, May 24, 1744, on Canso, where there were about seventy-five English soldiers. They were surprised and taken to Louis-

burg as prisoners of war. The French, assisted by Indians, then made an attack on Annapolis, and were repulsed, with the loss of killed, wounded and prisoners.

The New England colonies had viewed with alarm the erection of the defenses at Louisburg. They had kept informed of their progress during erection and had noted their weakness and their strength. They knew they were erected against them and in hostility to their monopoly of the cod fishery. Every colonial fisherman and trader along the eastern coast brought home his story of the growing aggression and insolence of the French, and thus the public mind was kept apprehensive and hostile. The feeling was universal that war was inevitable. It was only a question of how and when. So when the government of Massachusetts was informed that the French had actually begun open hostilities, it declared war against the French and Indians, and offered a bounty for scalps and prisoners.

At the risk of a brief digression from our topic it may be well here to note the remarkable action of Massachusetts in assuming the powers and responsibilities of an independent government by a public declaration of war. She had had no communication with or instructions from the home government. Her action is an anomaly in history and polities and illustrates the self-reliance and independence of the colonists even more forcibly than their capture of Louisburg.

Among those who had definite knowledge of the conditions at Louisburg was William Vaughan of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He had been a skipper and trader along the eastern coast for many years. By many he was regarded as visionary and impracticable. That he was a man of independent thought and great energy seems to be unquestioned. His con-

temporaries and historians generally have conceded that to him belongs the credit and honor of having originated the scheme of capturing Louisburg by a colonial attack. That the strongest fortress in America could be captured by an undisciplined army of fishermen, farmers, tradesmen and mechanics, with no cannon larger than twenty-two pounders, while the fortress mounted scores of forty-two pounders, was indeed seemingly impracticable and visionary, yet such was his information concerning the fortress itself, its weak and mutinous garrison and their scanty supplies, that he succeeded in impressing his views upon Governors Wentworth of New Hampshire and Shirley of Massachusetts, who soon became earnest advocates of the expedition. As the French ships bringing supplies to Louisburg in the fall of 1744 did not arrive until after its harbor was closed by ice, they sailed to the West Indies, leaving the garrison without its usual annual consignment of commissary and military stores. The supplies being limited, the prisoners captured at Canso were released and sent to Boston. When the reports of these soldiers, corroborating by their personal knowledge the statements made by Vaughan as to the weakness of the fortress and its garrison, were heard and considered, Governor Shirley not only approved but became enthusiastic in his advocacy of an expedition to capture the stronghold upon which France had expended so much effort and money.

In the month of January, 1745, he informed the Legislature of Massachusetts that he had a very confidential and important communication to make to them and asked them to take an oath to receive it in confidence. As the governor was personally popular and known to be zealous for the welfare of the colony they assented and took the oath of secrecy. To their amazement he proposed that, with the

aid of the other colonies they attempt the capture of Louisburg. They had hoped that the Mother Country would some time capture it and relieve them of the dangers which threatened their fisheries and commerce, but that they, without experienced officers, disciplined soldiers or heavy cannon, should attempt such a campaign seemed as preposterous to them as it did to Franklin, who a few weeks later wrote to his brother: "Fortified towns are hard nuts to crack and your teeth have not been accustomed to it. Taking strong places is a particular trade, which you have taken up without serving an apprenticeship to it. Armies and veterans need skillful engineers to direct them in their attack. Have you any? But some seem to think forts are as easy taken as snuff." The legislators therefore asked time to consider the proposition and soon after rejected it by a decisive vote. The governor was too much in earnest to abandon the expedition at once. He and his friends entered enthusiastically upon the task of convincing the Legislature and the prominent citizens of Boston that the plan of attack was not only feasible but that success was quite probable; that both duty and interest demanded the attempt. The Legislature yielded; a reconsideration was carried and the expedition voted by one majority. The governor lost no time in putting the sanction of the Legislature beyond recall. He issued a proclamation to his people announcing the proposed campaign and wrote the governors of the several colonies, asking their co-operation and assistance. Pennsylvania and New Jersey promised provisions and clothing, but none came. The Legislature of New York refused troops, but loaned ten twenty-two pounders, some powder and provisions. These guns were the largest the colonists had, and without them the proposed siege would have been supremely ridiculous. Rhode Island

promised troops, but none arrived until after Louisburg had surrendered. Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire furnished all the troops which participated in the siege. The command of the expedition was assigned to Mr. William Pepperrell of Kittery, in the province of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts. Colonel Waldo, also from Maine, was originally designated as the second in command, but Connecticut, having made that rank a condition precedent to its joining the expedition, General Wolcott, then its deputy-governor and colonel of its regiment, was commissioned next to General Pepperrell in authority.

The work of enlistment was begun promptly and carried on vigorously. From the beginning the inspiration of the expedition was a strange mixture of religious enthusiasm, commercial greed and national hatred. The Puritan ministers were zealous because the French were Catholics and, it was asserted, had images in their churches which they worshipped. On Sunday they preached the Christian duty of destroying such idolatry and establishing the true faith of the Puritan, where heresy had so long prevailed. The week-day prayer and conference meetings emphasized those duties and became efficient recruiting agencies for the army. The great religious revival begun in 1734 by Jonathan Edwards had been continued by the eminent English preacher, George Whitfield, and all New England was under its influence. Mr. Whitfield suggested "*Nil Desperandum Christo Duce*" as the motto for the flag of the expedition, and it was adopted. Thus the capture of Louisburg became a New England crusade for the glory of God and the coming of His kingdom among men.

To merchants, ship-owners and seamen the importance of the fur trade, the fisheries and the eastern coast traffic was presented, and the danger to the commerce of New England from

the French stronghold magnified and discussed.

All the colonists were hostile to the French, with whom they had been so frequently at war. They recognized them as the hereditary enemies of England and believed that they had incited the Indians to pillage and murder.

Under such incentives it was not strange that within two months the full quota of men was enlisted, supplies secured and ships and transports engaged for the expedition. It consisted of 4,070 men. Of these Massachusetts is generally credited with 3,250, Connecticut with 516, and New Hampshire with 304. There were ten regiments in all. Connecticut and New Hampshire had one each. That part of Massachusetts now the state of Maine furnished three regiments. Massachusetts proper supplied the other five regiments.

Col. Samuel Moore commanded the New Hampshire regiment. Potter, in his military history of New Hampshire, and Gilmore, special commissioner of our state, in his report of 1896 on the New Hampshire men at Louisburg, claim that New Hampshire furnished 500 men, or one eighth of the whole number. I have not been able to justify these claims, and as they do not give the muster rolls for that number they cannot be regarded as historically accurate. It is undoubtedly true that there were New Hampshire men enrolled in Massachusetts regiments, but, so far as I am advised, the number so enrolled cannot now be definitely ascertained. The New Hampshire men sailed from Portsmouth in advance of the others, under convoy of an armed sloop, with thirty men, commanded by Capt. John Fernald of Portsmouth, and arrived at Canso on the first of April, nearly a week before the Massachusetts troops. Doctor Belknap, who wrote the history of our state only forty years after the capture of Louisburg and who must have had personal

knowledge of and interviews with many who participated in the siege, says there were eight companies of the New Hampshire troops, while a return made by Colonel Moore, which is still in existence, accounts for only seven companies, having only 275 men —257 fit for duty and 18 on the sick list. Fifty-one of these he reports as paid by Massachusetts. As Colonel Moore states in this return the number in each company of this regiment, he must be presumed to be accurate.

After the surrender of Louisburg New Hampshire sent 115 men there as a reinforcement to its regiment. It is possible that these men constituted the eighth company specified by Doctor Belknap. However that may be, we are safe in saying that New Hampshire contributed the 304 men in Colonel Moore's regiment and the thirty men on the armed sloop, being 334 men as its part of the original expedition and also the 115 men sent as reinforcements, or 449 men in all, exclusive of those under other commands.

The Massachusetts troops on about 103 transports sailed March 24 from Nantasket Roads, encountered a severe storm and arrived at Canso on the 5th and 6th of April. They were convoyed by a fleet of fourteen armed vessels, carrying 204 guns, commanded by Capt. Edward Tyng. The Connecticut troops arrived some ten days later.

Preceding these preparations Governor Shirley wrote to England asking protection for the fisheries of Acadia and New England, but did not suggest any definite offensive operations against the French. Later he asked Commodore Warren, who was in command of the English fleet in American waters and then at Antigua in the West Indies, to join the expedition against Louisburg. This Commodore Warren refused to do without specific instructions from the home government. Soon after his refusal he received dispatches from

England directing him to proceed at once to Boston to render the colonies such aid as they might need. While on the voyage he spoke a schooner from Boston, which informed him the expedition had sailed, whereupon he changed his course to Canso.

The colonists sailed without any encouragement that the English fleet would coöperate with them. It was therefore with great joy that they were informed by the English frigate *Eltham*, which came into port on the 22d of April, that Commodore Warren was on his way to join them with three ships of war. His arrival the next day caused renewed confidence and universal rejoicing.

While the troops were at Canso they built a little wooden fort or blockhouse, upon which some small cannon were mounted, and occupied their time in marching and perfecting themselves in the manual of arms. The ice did not leave Gabarus Bay and the harbor of Louisburg until the last of April.

It was the hope of Governor Shirley that Louisburg could be surprised and captured without a siege. To that end he gave specific directions as to when the fleet should leave Canso and when arrive off Louisburg and when assault the fortifications. The fleet was to arrive at night and the assault take place before morning and while the unsuspecting garrison was asleep. Just how 4,000 men and their necessary equipments could be landed upon an unknown shore and walls over thirty feet high which they had never seen could be sealed in the darkness without disturbing the sentinels or arousing the garrison, the governor very discreetly did not undertake to describe.

The fleet sailed on the 29th of April on time as directed, but owing to adverse winds did not enter Gabarus Bay off Louisburg until about eight o'clock of the morning of the next day.

The *Habitant de Louisbourg*, in his account of the siege, says that:

"From the first moment we had information about them and in abundant time. . . . We had the whole winter before us—more time than was necessary to put ourselves in a state of defense. We were, however, overcome with fear. Councils were held, but the outcome was only absurd and childish. . . . Nothing was done, and the result is that we were taken by surprise, as if the enemy had pounced upon us unawares."

Whether or not the condition of the French was as is here described, it is certain that they appeared to be surprised, and made only very feeble resistance to the landing of the troops. Pepperrell attempted to land at Flat Point Cove, about two miles from the city, but was met by a detachment of about 200 French soldiers, whereupon the boats proceeded westward nearly two miles to Freshwater Cove, where a landing was effected before the French could march over the rough ground to oppose them. An engagement ensued and the French were compelled to retire, with the loss of killed and prisoners. The landing of the troops with their guns, equipments and supplies was no further opposed, and about one half of them were debarked that day and the others on the first day of May. They encamped on both sides of a fresh water brook, near where they first attempted to land. This camp was maintained throughout the siege.

The army thus encamped upon a foreign shore and about to engage in a siege to become memorable in history had the usual organization of that period, the most peculiar of its usages or regulations being that the colonel of a regiment was also the captain of one of its companies. The army had not been organized long enough to become a unit in action, though it was cohesive through its tenacity of purpose. It seems to have been harmonious and efficient, yet there was a freedom and individuality

in its operations which in modern times would be regarded as subversive of discipline.

This is manifested in the various requests to General Pepperrell from officers of minor rank for authority to conduct special expeditions or to lead assaults upon some specific battery or outpost. The usual practice seems to have been to obtain authority for the proposed action and then to call for volunteers for the service or to pass around a "subscription paper" for those to sign who would agree to join in the proposed reconnaissance or attack. Sometimes after the requisite number had volunteered they met and elected their leader or commander. There were also many supernumerary officers, some of whom were not even attached to a regiment. Of this number was William Vaughan, the proctor of the expedition, who, though a New Hampshire man, was commissioned a lieutenant-colonel without specific command by Governor Shirley of Massachusetts. That he was held in high esteem is evident from a letter the governor wrote General Pepperrell, under date of March 23, 1745, as follows:

"I desire you would let Mr. Vaughan, who goes a volunteer to Cape Breton in this expedition, and has been very instrumental in promoting it, both within this and the neighboring provinces, and has the success of it much at heart, assist in your councils, and I do appoint him to be one of it. Your countenance and protection of him, also, so far as is proper, I shall esteem a favor."

The records of the councils held by General Pepperrell show that Colonel Vaughan was regular in his attendance and that he was an efficient and honored member of them.

General Pepperrell had not fully established his camp when in the afternoon of the first of May he detailed 400 men, under command of Colonel Vaughan, many of them being from New Hampshire, to reconnoiter north

of the town and harbor under the shelter of the Green Hills. He passed through the woods north of the royal battery and came out just above the northeast harbor, which stretches over the lighthouse point. Here he found many warehouses filled with naval and other stores wholly undefended. Recognizing that those stores could not be transported to camp, he decided at once to burn them. As they were largely composed of tar, turpentine and other highly inflammable materials, they made much smoke, which floated down to the royal battery, and the English accounts say so alarmed the French that they hastily abandoned it and fled into the town. The French annals deny that they were frightened by the smoke, but admit that they supposed the colonists were in large force back of them and that they were taken by surprise. Having destroyed the stores Colonel Vaughan sent his command back to camp, retaining only about a dozen men as a bodyguard and for observation and scouting service. They spent the night in the woods. The next morning Colonel Vaughan crawled close to the royal battery to ascertain as much as possible of its location, condition and garrison. To his surprise he noticed that no flag floated from its staff, no smoke issued from its chimneys and no soldiers were in sight. He sent forward one of his men, who climbed into an embrasure and found the battery deserted. This he signaled to Vaughan, who came forward with his men and took possession of the battery. Upon a scrap of paper, which is still preserved, he sent the following dispatch:

“Royal Battery At Louisburg.

May 2, 1745.

“To

The Hon^{ble} Wm. Pepperrell, Esq.
General, &c.

“May it please your Honor to be informed that with the grace of God

and the courage of about thirteen men I entered this place about nine o’clock and am waiting here for a reinforcement and a flag. . . .

“Yours,

“W. Vaughan.”

The French had deserted the battery in such haste that they destroyed only a small part of their stores and spiked their cannon so ineffectually that the colonial gunsmiths, under the lead of Pomeroy of Massachusetts, had several of them in action the following morning.

The *Habitant de Louisbourg* says in his letter:

“The enemy took possession of the surrounding country and a detachment pushed forward close to the Royal Battery. Now terror seized us all. From this moment the talk was of abandoning the splendid battery, which would have been our chief defense had we known how to make use of it. Several tumultuous councils were held to consider the situation. Unless it was from a panic fear which never left us again during the whole siege, it would be difficult to give any reason for such an extraordinary action. Not a single musket had yet been fired against this battery. . . .

By order of the council a battery of thirty pieces of cannon, which had cost the king immense sums, was abandoned without undergoing the slightest fire. The retreat was so precipitate that we did not take time to spike the guns in the usual manner. So that on the very next day the enemy used them. . . . What I had foreseen happened. From the third the enemy greeted us with our own cannon and kept up a tremendous fire against us. We answered them from the walls, but we could not do them the harm which they did to us in knocking down houses and shattering everything within range.”

It is stated that the Massachusetts

artillerymen, though they had no cannon larger than twenty-two pounders, brought with them a large quantity of forty-two pound balls for use in the French cannon when captured. This extreme foresight on their part has been characterized as "skinning the bear before he is caught," but in this instance the bear consented to the act. As the siege progressed some of these cannon were removed to the batteries erected by the colonists against the fortifications and contributed much to their demolition.

General Pepperrell was greatly elated by the capture of the Royal Battery and good cheer and courage ruled the new-made camp. He immediately planned his first battery of investment, which was located on the slope of the Green Hills, about 1,550 yards from the west bastion. It was begun, says Parsons in his life of Pepperrell, on the third of May. The cannon were rolled along easily on their wheels until they struck the marsh which occupied the front of the land defenses, when they began to sink and were soon immovable. There were no draught horses or oxen, and if available they would have been useless in the morass, as they would have sunk in the bog quicker than the cannon. The reliance of the French upon the natural defenses of the town seemed to be justified. In this dilemma Lieutenant-Colonel Meserve of New Hampshire solved the difficulty. He was a ship-builder by trade and may have been engaged in getting the king's masts or other heavy timber over soft places. He suggested that wooden sledges sixteen feet long and five feet wide be built, with long ropes attached, that a cannon be lashed to each sledge and then that a couple hundred men draw it to the desired location.

In four days a battery of six guns was in action. A week later they had dragged four twenty-two pounders and ten coehorns to within less than a thousand yards of the walls. This

battery was succeeded by another, at a distance of 440 yards, and by still another, so near the fortifications that the combatants jeered each other. This last and nearest battery, sometimes called the breaching battery, was erected within eighteen days after the landing. In addition to these fascine batteries, each nearer the walls than its predecessor and all as nearly as possible opposite the west gate, the Dauphin bastion and the walls between it and the citadel, which they had battered day by day, was the northwest or Titecomb's battery, located on rising ground, capable of entrenchment, just across the west arm of the harbor, a little west of north of the city and about a half mile distant. In many respects it was the most powerful battery of the besiegers. It was composed of five of the forty-two pounders captured at the royal battery. These cannon were drawn more than a mile by the soldiers on sledges and were mounted ready for action on the twentieth day of the siege. These guns were directed against the circular battery and the Dauphin bastion, which they practically silenced, leaving the breaching or nearest battery free to accomplish its work. Duchambon, the French commander, said Titecomb's battery did them more damage than any other.

The colonists erected only one other battery during the siege. It was near the lighthouse, about opposite the island battery and 800 yards distant from it. It was advantageously situated on high land and was equipped with cannon found in the water, where they had been dropped by the French. They had not been mounted —another proof of the inefficiency of the defense. They were supplemented by a large mortar brought from Boston. This battery completed the land investment, and with Commodore Warren guarding the entrance to the harbor the city was completely encompassed.

On the seventh day of the siege,

when only two batteries had been erected and no breach had been made in the fortifications, General Pepperrell summoned the city to surrender. The *Habitant de Louisbourg* says: "We answered as our duty demanded." Probably General Pepperrell did not expect a surrender at that time, but thought it politic for some reason to make the demand. Yet it is recorded that an order was issued to storm the city two days later, which was countermanded because so many officers and men thought it ill advised at that time.

During the entire siege the island battery was the source of much anxiety and annoyance to the besiegers. It appears that Commodore Warren did not think it wise for him to attack that battery with his ships of war and that he would not attempt to enter the harbor with his vessels until it had been silenced by the land forces. General Pepperrell needed the co-operation of the fleet, which served the one purpose only of guarding the harbor entrance. Just why the fleet could not have rendered more efficient service it is difficult to understand. That the island battery was under anxious consideration by the land forces at an early date is shown by a letter written by Colonel Vaughan to General Pepperrell as follows:

"Royal Battery, May 11, 1745.

"Honorable Sir:

"I am awfully persuaded that I can take the Island Battery from this place with the boats that are here, if you think proper to give the taking of the place to myself. I dare to engage with the blessing of God to send you the flag within forty-eight hours from this time, if you think proper to give me orders to conduct the affair entirely by my own judgment; with the concurrence of the party to go with me, I doubt not of success. I think I perfectly know the rocks we have already split on and can avoid them or any other for the future.

"If my offer be accepted the sooner I have the order the better, being persuaded I can find men enough that will willingly go with me.

"I am, Honorable Sir, with all due respects

"Your most obedient servant,
"W. Vaughan."

I have not been able to find any reply to this letter or that any action was taken at that time upon its suggestions. As there is no record that Colonel Vaughan led an attack on that battery it is presumed the authority requested was not granted.

It is stated that there were five different attempts to capture the island battery. If so there is no detailed account of them and no specific reports of any but the last one, which was so disastrous to the colonists. This attack was made in the evening of the 26th of May by about 400 men, led by Captain Brooks of New Hampshire. It is presumed that he was chosen leader by the men themselves. It is undisputed that he was brave and competent. The battery was located upon an isolated rocky island difficult of approach, well fortified and resolutely defended. The attack was bravely made and well sustained. The boats of the attacking party were sighted by the French soon after they left the lighthouse point and were subjected to a continuous fire. The landing was arduous and the men who reached the defences were too few to succeed. They were compelled to retreat, having sustained a loss of about sixty killed and more than a hundred prisoners. This was the only failure of consequence which the colonists sustained and the only French victory during the siege.

It has been stated that the French, through the late arrival of their fleet in the autumn of 1744, failed to supply Louisburg with its annual consignment of commissary and military stores. This failure had caused the governor no anxiety until the city was

completely invested by land and by sea. He had hoped that a French fleet would raise the siege; but none came. Only one small vessel had been able to run the blockade and reach the harbor. It brought few supplies. Other small vessels had been captured whose cargoes supplemented the diminishing stores of the colonists.

It appears that the French home government was not unmindful of the needs of Louisburg. Undoubtedly its failure to renew the various stores of the fortress the preceding year was well known and the subject of some anxiety. So, early in 1745, a vessel was fitted out at Brest with all needed supplies and ordered to sail in season to be off Louisburg as soon as the harbor would be free from ice. While in port this vessel was accidentally burned. Further delay was inevitable. At last the French man-of-war *Vigilant*, a new vessel, for the first time put in commission manned by five hundred men and armed with sixty-four guns, set sail for Louisburg. It carried stores of all kinds. When it sailed it was not known in France that any attempt to capture the fortress was contemplated, and even had the colonial expedition been known it would have been treated with contempt. The man-of-war arrived off Louisburg about the 18th of May. The presence of the blockading fleet, under the command of Commodore Warren, was the first intimation the *Vigilant* had that Louisburg was besieged. At that time there was a strong northeast wind very favorable for entering the harbor, the English fleet was miles to the leeward, and had the commander of the *Vigilant* made all sail he probably could have run the blockade. But he did not know the strength of the English fleet and encountering a colonial ship gave chase and was led toward the fleet, so that he was soon engaged with Commodore Warren's principal force. The fight lasted from about the middle of the afternoon until ten o'clock

at night, when the *Vigilant*, surrounded by the most powerful vessels of the English fleet, was compelled, like a stag at bay, to succumb to the power it could no longer resist. Thus the last hope of the French for reinforcements was destroyed. Some accounts, like that of the *Habitant de Louisbourg*, state that the French saw the *Vigilant* and knew of its fight and capture. The English represent that the French had no knowledge of the capture until weeks after, when they were informed of it under a flag of truce sent them by General Pepperrell, ostensibly to demand better treatment for his soldiers, then prisoners of war, but really to give the French officer who accompanied the flag an opportunity to tell of the capture of the *Vigilant* and the strength of the besiegers, while certifying to the excellent treatment accorded him and the other prisoners of war held by the English.

The colonists were busy—some of their batteries had been in operation for more than a month and all of them for weeks. Large breaches had been made in the walls near the west gate, nearly every building in the town was shattered and the island battery was disabled. It was known that the French supply of powder was nearly exhausted. The fire of the colonists had been continuous and effective; that of the French irregular and generally harmless. The defense became weaker each day and by the eleventh of June it was evident to friend and foe that Louisburg was doomed. During the entire siege the garrison had been too weak to justify sorties and therefore the colonists had been uninterrupted in their work except as the guns of the fortress occasionally drove them to shelter. The camion had done their work. The way seemed open to carry the fortifications by assault and end the siege in glory.

On the 14th of June General Pepperrell welcomed Commodore Warren

to camp to plan a combined assault by land and sea. General Pepperrell was ready to make the land attack, but Commodore Warren, who had done nothing of note with his eleven English ships of war, carrying 524 guns, and with all the colonial vessels under his command, except to capture the *Vigilant* and blockade the harbor, was unwilling to assault the island battery or to attempt to run past it with his ships unless the *Vigilant* should be manned by 600 of the land forces and lead the line of battleships. At first General Pepperrell objected that he could not spare that number of men from his available force. But Commodore Warren was inflexible and General Pepperrell yielded. The New Hampshire regiment under Cotonel Moore volunteered for this hazardous service. It is said that the troops were paraded, the proposed assault communicated to them and that they were exhorted to remain steadfast and show their courage by brave deeds. The soldiers were enthusiastic and answered by cheers. Pending the arrangement of other details the conference was continued until the next day.

Meanwhile the fleet had been brought closer to the harbor entrance and cruised in sight of the fortress. Unusual activity pervaded the camp and the several batteries. The lighthouse battery bombarded the island battery incessantly and it was fast becoming useless as a defense. These activities and the conferences of the two commanders did not escape the notice of the French. The governor, M. Duchambon, wrote General Pepperrell on the 15th of June, proposing a suspension of hostilities with a view to the surrender of the garrison of Louisburg upon such terms as could be mutually agreed upon.

General Pepperrell and Commodore Warren replied at once, saying his letter arrived "at a happy juncture to prevent the effusion of Christian blood, as we were together, and had

just determined upon a general attack."

They granted an armistice until eight o'clock the next morning, at which hour M. Duchambon was to present his formal offer of surrender. The conditions then submitted were regarded as inadmissible and they sent him an ultimatum, which was to expire at six o'clock that evening. Duchambon had no alternative and he sent a hostage with a letter to General Pepperrell, accepting the terms offered, but requesting that his troops be allowed to march out of the town with their arms and colors flying—to be given up immediately afterward. This request was granted.

On the afternoon of the 17th of June General Pepperrell, at the head of his army, marched through the Dauphin gate into the town and received its keys from the commandant, who had his garrison drawn up in the king's bastion to receive him. The military etiquette of the occasion was punctiliously observed. Each army saluted the other. Then the French flag was saluted and lowered. As the lilies of France fluttered down the flag-staff the cross of St. George arose over the citadel and was saluted by the guns of the army and navy and the cheers of the soldiers and sailors who had endured so much to secure the triumph and glory of that hour.

About the same time Commodore Warren sent a party of marines to take possession of the island battery, which had caused him so much anxiety, and then sailed into the harbor with his fleet. Just forty-nine days from the arrival of the colonists in Gabarus Bay they were in possession of Louisburg and its garrison were their prisoners of war.

The prisoners of war were immediately put on board the fleet, as stipulated in the terms of capitulation, and on the 4th of July a man-of-war and eleven transports sailed with them for France, where they arrived safely.

Thus the expedition born of reli-

gious enthusiasm, commercial greed and national pride ended in victory and glory. The Fates were propitious. Gibson, the merchant of Boston who was of the expedition, says in his diary:

"From the first day of the siege until the surrender of the city it was such fine weather that not one single day was lost in the prosecution of the design. Fair weather during the siege and rain and fog as soon as it was over. Every ship coming with provisions, munitions of war and reinforcements was captured by the besiegers."

Every event and detail of the expedition and of the siege, with the one exception of the assault on the island battery, were favorable to the English and unlucky for the French. Even the most preposterous of the plans of the colonists were successful. They succeeded against all military maxims and precedents—even the forces of nature were their allies. The result justified Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, who said: "No one in common sense can deny a particular Providence in this affair." And again, "Methinks when the southern gates of Louisburg were opened, and our army with their banners were marching in, the gates were lifted up, and the King of Glory went in with them."

Whatever our views as to special Providences, all agree that the expedition against Louisburg is among the most illustrious of all the exploits of volunteers known to history; that an unusual concurrence of favorable events attended their persistent and heroic efforts and that the achievements of that campaign had an important influence upon the future of the English colonies. The watchwords of the hours were coöperation, combination and self-reliance.

In his "Life of General Pepperrell" Parsons says:

"General Pepperrell gave a banquet to his officers soon after taking posses-

sion of the fortress. Parson Moody of York, Me., the uncle of Mrs. Pepperrell, was the elder and the most prominent of the chaplains present. He was generally very long in all his prayers and addresses. Everybody dreaded to have him say grace, fearing he would occupy so much time that the banquet would become cold. He was so irritable no one was willing to suggest that brevity would be acceptable. Whether or not he had a hint, he surprised his friends and disappointed his enemies by the following: 'Good Lord! We have so many things to thank Thee for that time will be infinitely too short to do it; we must therefore leave it for the work of eternity. Bless our food and fellowship upon this joyful occasion, for the sake of Christ, our Lord. Amen.'"

The news of the surrender of the fortress reached Boston about day-break of the third of July. Bells were rung and it is stated in a letter to General Pepperrell under date of July 4, 1745, that "the people of Boston before sunrise were as thick about the streets as on an election day . . . We had last night the finest illumination I ever beheld with my eyes. I believe there was not a house in town, in no by-lane or alley, but joy might be seen through its windows."

These glittering manifestations of rejoicing were succeeded by a day of public thanksgiving, with services in all the churches. The sermons then preached, so far as they have been preserved to us, are in the flowery and prolix style of that period, but are all devout and thankful.

When England heard of the capture of Louisburg there was great rejoicing, as her arms on the continent had been generally unsuccessful. This victory enabled her eventually to conclude a treaty in honor, though not one of any especial advantage to her.

The chief of artillery and engineer in charge of the investment of Louis-

burg was Richard Gridley, who subsequently planned the redoubt for Prescott on Bunker Hill and had command of the provincial artillery there.

It is said that the same drums which beat on the triumphal entry of General Pepperrell into Louisburg led the march of the patriots to Bunker Hill.

Matthew Thornton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, in behalf of our state, was the surgeon of the New Hampshire regiment at Louisburg.

Upon their return from Louisburg the New Hampshire regiment brought a bell which they had captured and presented it to the Queen's Chapel in Portsmouth. It has been recast and is now in the tower of St. John's Church in that city.

The Louisburg expedition cost New Hampshire 26,489 pounds of its

money. It was reimbursed by England 16,355 pounds sterling.

The colonists having captured Louisburg were compelled to hold it until troops could come from England to relieve them. This was nearly a year. During that time they suffered much more from inclement weather and from sickness than from all the hardships of the siege. The deaths during that period vastly exceeded those during open hostilities.

By the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle between England and France in 1748 it was stipulated that "all things should be restored on the footing they were before the war."

All the effort and sacrifices of the colonies apparently had been useless. But no worthy effort is without its reward. From the union of the colonies, though they knew it not, a new nation was to be born.





DEC 14 1963

3

28 w





JAN 18 198

